

Husserl's Concept of Living and Conscious Matter. From Nature to Spirit as a Reversed Way of Constitution of the Mind

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Introduction

The central topic of this present essay will be the question how Husserl ascends from the level of pure physical materiality to the level of conscious animal nature. It could be characterized as a reversed way of constitution. In Husserl's transcendental phenomenology the normal, standard way of constitution was a so-to-say "inside-outside" direction: reduction to the immanence of pure consciousness, then moving towards different levels and types of transcendences; towards different levels of material and spiritual reality, which exist independent from our own mind, from our own sphere of ownness. As we could read in the second volume of *Ideas* (1912), which is devoted to the problem of constitution, there are three fundamental constitutive layers in mind-transcendent reality: pure physicality, animality and spiritual reality. Pure physicality founds animality, and that latter founds spirituality; each serves as a foundational layer for the other, "higher" level of reality. Next to this "inside-outside" way of constitution we can also speak of an opposite, "outside-inside" direction; when we face a fully constituted living being, and raise the question, how its internal, mental life, psychic reality is constituted from the outside, *from a third person view perspective*. The question is: how can we constitute, "from the outside", experiencing the physical body (Körper) of the organism, its "inside", its internal, mental aspect; and thus: how can we constitute its physical body (Körper) as lived body (Leib) at the very same time?

We shall start at the constitution of pure materiality. The awkwardness of situation could be seen at once: even the constitution of merely physical entities involves complex conscious achievements, activities; and, in this way, *a certain degree of self-constitution of subjectivity itself*. The constitution of materiality and self-constitution of subjectivity are *interwoven*. Constitution of physical things does not mean merely staring at them, motionless. It needs *bodily* movements: movements of the eye, hands, the head, movements in space. Constitution of physical things requires necessarily the constitution of our lived body (Leib), and in this way our bodily (embodied) subjectivity, which is situated within a physical environment. There is an interrelated relationship¹ between the constitution of the own body, and the surrounding world

¹ This interrelated relationship or circularity between constitution of bodily subject and the things could be clearly seen e.g., amongst others in *Thing and Space*-lecture (Hua [= Husserliana] 16 [1907]), in the second volume of

of physical entities. This intertwined relationship characterizes the higher levels of constitution: the level of animality and spirituality. Similarly to what we found in the *Logical Investigation* and in the *Crisis*,² there is a peculiar “zigzag”-structure between self-constitution and thing- (and world-)constitution; moving from subjective side of the intentional relationship, to the objective side, and back. This circularity, this zigzag-structure gains an even more sophisticated form on the higher levels of self- and thing- (and world-)constitution. This interrelatedness, this circularity in the constitution is another characteristic example of Husserl’s ultimately *non-foundationalist account of experience and things*.³

This *interlacement* between the subjective and objective side of constitution (between the relationship of embodied mind and experienced things and situation in the world) makes very complicated to explain the difference between merely physical and animated nature; and – at the very same time – this insight makes possible a scientifically and philosophically more accurate, non-reductivist explanation of the mind-body relationship and of the emergence of consciousness (conscious subjective experience) in the natural world. This problem (the interrelated structure of the constitution of subjectivity and objectivity) is strongly connected with the question: *how can we separate merely physical things, or non-conscious living beings from living beings with subjective, conscious experience?* We can call this question demarcation-problem of *conscious and non-conscious entities in the world*. This problem leads us to the issue of *constitution of animal beings and animal subjectivity*. The question is: when we can attribute consciousness (subjective, conscious experience) to a living being and why? In my opinion this field of investigation (animal consciousness) could shed light on the origins of consciousness in general, on its most essential features, and on its basic relationship with the body.

For Husserl the problem of animals, and particularly: animal consciousness, was not a marginal topic; though we cannot say that it was central for him either. But he returned to this problem from time to time; and – on the basis of textual places he devoted to the question – it

Ideas (= *Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy*) (Hua 4 [1912]), in *Analyses of passive synthesis* (Hua 11 [1918-1926]), in the texts of Husserliana 39 and in late D-Manuscripts.

² *Logical Investigations*: Hua 19/1: 22, [English <2001>: 174]. *Crisis* [= *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*]: Hua 6: 59, [English <1970>: 58]. Cf. also: Péter András Varga: “The Architectonic and History of Phenomenology. Distinguish-ing between Fink’s and Husserl’s Notion of Phenomenological Philosophy”. In *Phenomenology 2010 Vol. 4: Selected Essays from Northern Europe*, edited by Dermot Moran and Hans Rainer Sepp, 87–114. Bucharest / Paris: Zeta Books / Argos.

³ For a non-foundationalist interpretation of Husserl’s philosophy see e.g. John Drummond: *Husserlian Intentionality and Non-Foundational Realism*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990. Anthony Steinbock: *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995.

is obvious, that he realized the special importance of the issue from the point of view of explanation of appearance of consciousness in the natural world. A fundamental point of this problem-field is *whether every living being is conscious at the same time, or to live and to be conscious does not mean the same?* Because Husserl does not have a fully elaborated, systematic theory of animals (although, he has systematic trains of thoughts on this topic), we can find *conflicting* sentences and considerations in him, in this question. There are some textual places, according to which Husserl denies, or at least sceptical, whether plants or microbes have something like a consciousness.⁴ But there is a significant amount of other textual places, which shows the outlines of a radically different theory; a doctrine, which we could call “*biopsychism*”, so such an idea, according to which *every living being has a sort of consciousness of its own*.⁵ We can find such a theory (id est: biopsychism) in authors like Lynn Margulis,⁶ Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela.⁷

In this respect I would like to sketch of the outlines of *such a project*, which supports Husserl’s less characteristic standing-point in this question: so, we highlight such textual places in Husserl, in which *he demarcates life and consciousness*; that is to so: in which he makes a clear distinction between living and conscious organisms, stating that not every living being is conscious at the same time. We propagate this demarcation thesis, because in our opinion biopsychism, like *panpsychism* (according to which every physical entity whatsoever has a certain sort of consciousness),⁸ wants to explain *to much*, and therefore it explains *too little*. In this context we would like to join the philosophical entertainment of Dan Zahavi and Shaun Gallagher⁹ concerning a phenomenologically founded explanation of the origins and fundamental nature of consciousness, and particularly of conscious experience; an endeavour, which is open to the contemporary analytic philosophies of mind. Following the most important directives of the philosophical-scientific project of Zahavi and Gallagher, we focus on the problem of identifying *such level of biological complexity*, on which conscious activity in the widest sense of

⁴ Hua 14: 118, Hua 15: 432.

⁵ Hua 5: 10, Hua 15: 50, 596, 609, Hua Mat 8 [= Husserliana Materialien]: 108, 171, 176, Hua 39: 272, Hua 42: 165. See further: Nam-In Lee: *Edmund Husserls Phänomenologie der Instinkte*. Dordrecht: Springer, 1993: 225-230.

⁶ Lynn Margulis: “The Conscious Cell”. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, (2001) 929, 55–70.

⁷ Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela: *Autopoiesis and Cognition: the Realization of the Living*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1973.

⁸ See e.g. David Chalmers: “Panpsychism and Panprotopsyism”. In Torin Alter & Yujin Nagasawa (ed.): *Consciousness in the Physical World. Perspectives on Russellian Monism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015: 246-276. William E. Seager: “Consciousness, information, and panpsychism”. In *Journal of Consciousness Studies* (1995) 2 (3):272-88.

⁹ Dan Zahavi & Shaun Gallagher: *The Phenomenological Mind. An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*. London & New York: Routledge, 2008.

the word, *the lowest level of consciousness*, something, what could be called *minimal mind*,¹⁰ could be found at all. In description of the fundamental nature of this minimal mind, and also in explanation of lowest level of conscious experience in lower level animals, we highly rely on Husserl's analyses. In this present article I would like to treat the overall features of Husserl's theory of animal and animal consciousness; with a special regard to what Husserl's notion of animality and constitution of animal being could yield for the contemporary researches concerning the origins of consciousness and the basic level of conscious experience in animals.

In Husserl the constitution of corporeality (*Leiblichkeit*) and empathy are crucial topics in the context of constitution of animality and animal beings. On a higher level of constitution Husserl – just like the classical authors of French phenomenology (such as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Lévinas) – emphasized the embodied nature of consciousness. What is even more: he explicitly stated that the *ego* is never a mere point-like, metaphysical substance, outside the world; but bodily existence is an essential feature of every possible subject; he highlighted that corporeality is a fundamental aspect of mental, psychic being and experience in general. Subject and subjectivity without corporeality is a bare abstraction.¹¹ Corporeality is what links a subject to the world, is what places the subject within the environment of things and other subjects. We experience the other subject's body as the body of the other subject; as an *immediate* expression of his/her internal mental life. The *intentionality* which is directed to the other subject's lived body (*Leib*) is called *empathy*. The question concerning the emergence of consciousness in natural world, or concerning the lowest level of consciousness (*minimal mind*), is strongly correlated (but by no means identical) with the question of *widest possible range of empathy*; when in empathy we experience, we face a conscious being like us.¹² Scientifically articulated: it is the question of philosophically (and scientifically) legitimate attribution of consciousness to

¹⁰ For the concept of “minimal mind” see e.g.: Vincent Joseph Torley: *The Anatomy of Minimal Mind* (Ph.D. dissertation, 2007). Hyperlink: <http://www.angelfire.com/linux/vjtorley/Anatomy.pdf> (Date of last download: 13 October 2018).

An essential difference from Torley's standing-point and between us (between a phenomenologically founded notion of consciousness): that in Torley “phenomenality” or “quale” is not an essential feature of mind or of consciousness. (Torley: “I refrain from assuming at the outset that a minimal mind has to be phenomenally conscious”. Op. cit.). In this particular regard I would like to join to the opinion of Zahavi and Gallagher, what could be said – I think – to be a basic element of a phenomenologically legitimate account of consciousness in general: *that there is no consciousness without phenomenality*. It is my conviction (and it is also a central assumption of Zahavi and Gallagher, and – I believe – of phenomenology in general) *that phenomenal character is an a priori necessary, ineliminable structural component of any consciousness whatsoever*. (In Zahavi and Gallagher see: 2008: 108-120, 219f).

In the context of this essay we use the term “minimal mind” to refer to the lowest level of consciousness.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. Hua 13: 229, Hua 14: 336, Hua 41: 380. Last place: “Eine Person kann konkret nicht sein, ohne einen Körper als Leib zu haben”.

¹² See e.g.: Husserl's question whether we can feel empathy towards a jellyfish in a 1921 Manuscript (St. Märgen): Hua 14: 112-117.

non-human living beings, (and partly: also to other human beings). It is the problem of *extended intersubjectivity*.

Treating subjects – also animal subjects – as embodied minds, Husserl (very much like Jakob von Uexküll and Merleau-Ponty) concretizes the consciousness-object or consciousness-world relationship as *subjective body (organism)-environment correlation*. In the context of subjective, lived body-environment correlation, the minimal mind (as minimal animal mind), in Husserl, involves a minimal set of bodily capacities (a minimal set of “I can” [“Ich kann”]-capabilities), behavioural structures, basic instinctive drives and tendencies, a stream of minimal data, which – altogether – make up a *minimal world or minimal environment*. A minimal mind correlates with a minimal world; and in the quest for identifying the lowest level of consciousness,¹³ we have to unfold the phenomenological structure of this minimal correlation. This is the subjective, first person view-side of the minimal mind. On the other side there is an objective, third person perspective access to the functioning (Fungierung) and expression of this minimal mind: the *behaviour* of the animal body, as an expression of the internal, mental life of a subject (supposing that we are speaking of such a complex level of behaviour, which allows us to suppose a subjective side or aspect of this bodily expression), and the *functional apparatus* of the organism in question. Husserl was aware of the fact that in the phenomenology of consciousness the problem of *nervous system* is not without any importance;¹⁴ as the objective side or part of the *physio-psychological level of soul* (Seele).¹⁵

Focusing on Husserl’s own ideas on animal consciousness, we can roughly distinguish free main stages of his thought:¹⁶ the period of static account of animality and animal subjects (between approximately 1908-1916);¹⁷ the phase of genetic analyses (circa 1917/18-1928);¹⁸ and

¹³ We must also emphasize that this speech about “minimal mind” or “lowest level of consciousness” does not imply a critical acceptance of a rigid Cartesian dualism of mind-body distinction; so the acceptance of such an attitude with which Husserl himself – despite his positive, appreciative, often even laudative declaration on Descartes – was always critical.

We can also admit the *possibility of a sort of proto-consciousness or a preliminary form of consciousness*, which could be found much deeper than the level of clear, awaken phenomenal consciousness or experience. In Husserl we can also find this problematic under the name of phenomenology of unconscious (Unbewussten); in texts like e.g. Hua 11 (*Analysen zur Passiven Synthesis* [1919-1926]), 33 (*Bernauer Manuskripten* [1917/18]), 42 (*Grenzprobleme der Phänomenologie*, I. section [editorial division, 1915-1934]).

¹⁴ Cf. such references as e.g.: Hua 4: 138f, 156, 165, 189, 218, 231, 289-291, 343, 372f; Hua 13: 14, 216, 454; Hua 14: 68, 88; Hua 42: 137, 139f.

¹⁵ Nervous system as a part of the physio-psychological level: especially in *Ideas II* (Hua 4).

¹⁶ We shall add at once: the first closer look on the collection of Husserl’s works and manuscripts makes evident that there are no clear borders in the development of Husserl’s thoughts; it is only a rough simplification of a very complex and sophisticated line of evolution of his thinking – which has the sole function to make our task easier, in highlighting some peculiarities of Husserl’s theories in different stages of his career.

¹⁷ Hua 4, 5, 13.

¹⁸ Hua 9, 14, 32, Hua Mat 4.

the time when *phenomenology of instincts* became fundamental in his interpretation of subjectivity and animal subjectivity in particular (after 1929).¹⁹ In his last period the phenomenon of *generativity* also gained a special significance concerning the problem of animal being.²⁰ This present study will follow this order.

1. The Static Constitution of Animality and Animal Consciousness

Though we find the first systematic investigations concerning animality and animal consciousness in the second and third volumes of *Ideas* (1912), Husserl's interest in the problem of animals and constitution of animal being – at the latest – reaches back to the second half of the first decade of 1900. We can find references to this problem-field already in the manuscripts and lectures of the years 1907-1911.²¹ First the problem appeared (first and foremost) within the context of *monadology*; such a problematic which Husserl inherited partly from Leibniz and partly from Brentano. Husserl interprets “monads” as the fully concrete sphere of someone's mental life. The first systematic documents of Husserl's own monadology were manuscript B II 2, and the 1910/11 winter semester lecture *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*. In such texts Husserl applies the term “monad” to every conscious subject, to human beings as well as to animals; at some places even to plants (although in a very speculative manner).²² *Ideas II* presents a quite high level and matured version of his monadology. According to Husserl (in *Ideas II*) to every pure ego (reines Ich) belongs a fully concrete psychic ego (seelisches Ich), as a monadic reality, which is constituted by the pure ego.²³ Animals, (in the interpretation of *Ideas II*), as psychic subjects (seelische Subjekten), also have their own pure ego; and they constitute themselves in the form of animality, as animal realities.²⁴ Important in this context that in this period, before the systematic elaboration of the genetic method, transcendental subject is only *a pure, merely formal entity*: the pure ego – without any contents – is the source of every constitution and every constituted objects, and the psychic ego (seelisches Ich) or the monad is yet nothing but a constituted objectivity (Gegenstandlichkeit). In the 1920s years

¹⁹ Hua 15, 39, 42, Hua Mat 8.

²⁰ To “generativity” see: Anthony Steinbock: *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1995.

²¹ First of all: Ms. B II 2 (partly published in Hua 13 and Hua 42), B I 4 (unpublished), *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Hua 13: text No. 6 [English <2006>]), Lectures on ethics and value theory, 1908-1914 (Hua 28). In this lastly mentioned volume see e.g. Hua 28: 399ff; (comparisons between human and animal being in the context of philosophy of morals – from the 1902 summer semester lecture, *Basic Questions of Ethics*).

²² See Hua 42: 165. “Möglich wären auch Bewusstseine, geknüpft an Pflanzen, an alle organischen Wesen, auch an physische Systeme, die irgendwelche Analogie mit organischen Systemen haben: Sonnensysteme und am Ende die ganze Welt (die ja nie eine real geschlossene Endlichkeit sein kann)”.

²³ Cf. e.g. Hua 4: 108, 111.

²⁴ Cf. e.g. op. cit. 120, 134.

Husserl develops the concept of “transcendental person”,²⁵ who is rich in concrete contents and capacities, and who is a constituting agent also.

In this period (between 1907 and 1912) Husserl applies such a phenomenological method; which he later, retrospectively labels as “static analysis”.²⁶ Static analysis or static constitution unfolds already formed, finished and crystallized formations and structures of sense and experience; accomplished objectivities. The static investigations unfold a fix order of constitutive layers – such an order, which we meet in the second book of *Ideas*: purely material nature, animate, psychophysical nature and spiritual-cultural world. In this framework, from a constitutive point of view, the most fundamental, ultimately founding layer is *physical nature*; it founds animate-animal (seelische) reality, and this latter founds spiritual and cultural reality. These three are the most general, most important spheres of reality – though, the higher levels (beyond the plane of physical reality) are *abstract* in themselves, apart from the lower, founding layer of being.

Already within the framework of static phenomenology, we meet extremely complicated and entangled constitutive relationships. Even the constitution of a *solipsistic* form of nature, a merely material environment without every reference to other subjects, self-constitution of the subject – with her/his material body (Körper) – and the constitution of material environment is intrinsically correlated and interwoven; one cannot be constituted without the constitution of the other. They are mutually dependent. There is a circular, “zigzag” connection between them. The constitution of a single material thing implies the coordination of several different sensuous fields, it implicates a complicated mode of *synaesthesia*; the continuous, harmonious constitution of the vision of one and the same object during the correlated bodily motion of the subject; such as moving in space, turning the head, movements of the eyes, etc.²⁷ But the phenomenon which emerges from these series of coherent and harmonious constitution, from the coordination of several different, harmoniously flowing sensuous data of different sensory organs and from these movements of the body, *is still not the concrete, single material thing*. What we have yet is still a *phantom*:²⁸ a visually, perceptually concrete thing, *without substantiality and causality*. In order to have a fully concrete, at least from a certain point of view “accomplished”

²⁵ To this see: Sebastian Luft: “Husserl’s Concept of the «Transcendental Person»: Another Look at the Husserl-Heidegger Relationship”. In id.: *Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology*, Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011: 126-158.

²⁶ To this see: Sebastian Luft: “A Hermeneutic Philosophy of Subjective and Objective Spirit. Husserl, Natorp and Cassirer”. In id.: 2011: 235-267 (especially: 247ff). Furthermore: Hua 11: 336-345 (“Statische und genetische phänomenologische Methode” [1921]).

²⁷ For the details of such analyses in the early Husserl see e.g.: Hua 16 (*Thing and space*-lectures [1907]) and the first section of *Ideas II*.

²⁸ See: Hua 16: 78, Hua 4: 22, 36ff. Later: Hua 11: 23, 301ff, 362.

or “finished” object, we have to constitute *materiality* (substantiality) and *causality* also. Which can only happen through the constitution of a complex set of things, through the constitution of a material environment, which unfolds the *mutual dependences and interactions between things*. Causality and materiality are unfolded (and constituted) within the framework of a dynamic, changing environment of things; where causality refers to the mutual dependence and interrelations of entities on the one hand, and substantiality – on the other hand – expresses the individual, independent nature of objects. An important factor of the context is to know that substantiality and causality here treated *in a transcendental way*; they are regarded as *formations of sense*, and attributed to things in this way; *they count as a special way, in which things are constituted*.

[On the basis of the *nexus* of concrete material things, which is characterized with the attributes of substantiality and causality, *animality* could emerge and could be constituted, as a higher level phenomenon. An animate thing, a living organism, in Husserl is such a reality, which is a material substance, but which stands in a sensitive, flexible and dynamic relationship with its environment; in such a type of relationship, which is complex enough to be characterized as a sort of *behaviour* (Verhalten). A living being is in constant change, during which it strives after self-preservation, after preservation of its own individuality over against the environment. It is capable of self-control and self-determination; in a growing degree of complexity, which is correlated to its biological complexity. That is to say: there is a well-observable correlation between the complexity of behaviour and the complexity of the biological structure of the organism in question. *We are talking about the problem of constitution of life as a physically visible phenomenon (so: about the constitution of objective side of life)*. The living being is not just a material stuff, a dead, mechanical thing. It is such an entity, which strives constantly for keeping its integrity, its relative independence within the environment, to find those materials and fulfil those needs, which make possible of its relatively independent existence, (that is to say: which keep it alive). The dynamic set of those striving tendencies and actions are called behaviour.

In Husserl the animate layer of nature has further three major levels: 1) psychophysiological level, which connects the organism immediately to the realm of nature. Through psychophysiological reality the living being fits into the causal order, into the universal nexus of nature. 2) The idiopsychical layer, which expresses the specifically psychological sphere of the living being; the internality of lived experiences. 3) The intersubjective level; the intersubjective, communicative connections between animated beings, which is already present at the level of animals.

A fundamental question is *how causality turns into motivation*? The living being stands in causal relationship with the material reality. The organism, due to its biological structure, its cellular network, is in a constant communication with its environment, which is a causal process on the side incoming stimuli. These causal and micro-causal (cell- and even lower-level) patterns lay the foundation of motivational structures on the active, behavioural side of the living being. The causality, so-to-say, continuously melts into motivation. The motivation is correlated with a set of possible behavioural responses. The more complex the living being in question is, the more complex and flexible its behavioural structure. And, from a phenomenological point of view, behaviour is the expression of the mental inside. Husserl rejects psychophysical parallelism; though he sensitively and sophisticatedly integrates the soul and animated realities, through the lived body—physical body connection (Leib-Körper) into the causal order of nature].

2. The Genetic Origins of Animality and Animal Consciousness

“Der Grundcharakter der Phänomenologie ist also wissenschaftliche Lebensphilosophie”

(Natur und Geist, 1927, [Hua 27: 241])

The genetic “breakthrough” of phenomenology (around 1916/1917)²⁹ placed in a much wider context the problem of life. The genetic analysis disclosed every sense and every structure as a product of an *apriori, transcendental genesis*. More precisely: it unfolded everything in the process of becoming; it connected to every object (or objective fact or situation), as a result, a history; such a history which had an empirical and transcendental aspect. The genetic phenomenology, so-to-say, “bracketed the concept of «object»”,³⁰ as an outcome or end-product. In the end: genetic phenomenology unfolded the whole world, the entire reality as a process. Within this framework the genetic aspects of constitution of corporeality, animality and animal constitution became accessible and visible. The genetic approach showed the constitutional relationships between *life, animality, corporeality and environment* much more dynamic and sophisticated, as they were for the static description of those phenomena.

With the genetic phenomenology, the concept of “life” became central for Husserl, (though it was an important topic for him, earlier too); as we can clearly see it in Bernau Manuscripts (1917/18). The “life” first and foremost was for him the immanent life of human consciousness (more precisely: the consciousness or conscious life of a fully matured, *intelligent*, thinking

²⁹ Cf.: Hua 13: 346-357. See also: Rudolf Bernet—Iso Kern—Eduard Marbach: *Edmund Husserl. Darstellung Seines Denkens*. Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2016: 181.

³⁰ The phrasing of Tamás Ullmann: *A láthatatlan forma. Sematizmus és intencionalitás*. Budapest: L'Harmattan, 2016. (*The Invisible Forma. Schematism and Intentionality*). (In Hungarian).

transcendental subject); but it has certain lower levels. Such levels appeared in him (yet within the context of genetic phenomenology, or – at least – accompanied with genetic analyses), in his lectures *Nature and Spirit*, which he kept in 1919³¹ and 1927. In this period, we can also meet the problem of genetic constitution of animality, and particularly of animal consciousness in texts like *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* (1918-1926), the second volume of *On the Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* (1921-1928) and *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925). In the writings of this stage, the problem of animality appeared in the context of the correlated constitution of immanent and transcendent aspects and moments of life; where this constitution was understood as a genetic process, as a form of becoming.

Though there are eight years between the two lecture *Nature and Spirit*, both had the concept and problem of “life” in their centre. Those lectures could be placed in the context of the methodological debates concerning the method of social sciences in the first half of the 20th century; that took place between the positivists (who represented the view that the method of social sciences must be identical with the method of natural sciences) and anti-positivists (who had the conviction that the method of natural and social sciences must be different, and social sciences had a method, which is peculiar to the social-cultural sphere); (which latter standing-point was mostly represented by Neo-Kantians). Husserl – not surprisingly – propagated the anti-positivist side in the methodological debates of the early 1900s. Husserl had been always against homogenizing reductionism; he had been always very sensitive to the peculiarities and particular differences of the different regions of objects; such as most generally the spheres of nature and spirit. He even emphasized the differences within such general regions. He claimed that those spheres demand different methodological attitudes: such as *naturalistic* and *personalistic stance*. But Husserl did not only distinguish, differentiate – his strategy was much more sophisticated, than articulating a rather obvious and simple dualism. He – at the same time – through the chain of mutually joined differences and connections, built bridges between every level of being and constitution; he – simultaneously – created a continuous scale of transitions everywhere within the sphere of reality. He was a *monist*; but he represented and articulated his monism in a very differentiated and sophisticated way.

Most importantly: the universal, central phenomenon, which unities those different spheres (the most general regions of nature and spirit) is that of *life*. It is life which articulates and constitutes itself on the different levels and degrees of reality; in different forms and grades of

³¹ In the 1919 lecture Husserl did not use the term “genetic”. But there is the expression “passive process”. Hua Mat 4: 178. And the lecture itself already shows the overall features of genetic approach.

complexity. The complexity of life is expressed in its immanent and transcendent; the complexity we are talking about is the complexity of its (immanent and transcendent) expressions and modes of functioning (Fungierung). This life constitutes itself in forms of cellular (microbial), vegetative life-forms (plants) and in lower and higher level animals; with mutually and inseparably connected immanent and transcendent moments.³² The systematic and coherent objective connections (gegenständliche Zusammenhänge) on the levels of non-organic (inanimate) nature refer already to the level of organicity and to animate reality; so, the inanimate nature in its systematic, cohesive objective connectedness could be regarded (according to Husserl) as a pre-form of organic nature. Under the genetic scope we could treat and understand the self-constitution of life, the interaction and connection of its different (immanent and transcendent) moments, in a much richer and much more accurate way than earlier.

Similarly to *Ideas II*, in the lecture *Nature and Spirit* 1919 we can meet a threefold division in constitution of animality: 1) the animate *physical* body, which is the proper topic of zoology, 2) the animate *lived body* (Leib) as a sensitive-sensing body and 3) the animate soul (animalische Seele) as such.³³ This distinction refers to *constitutive levels of the monadic reality; to levels of monadic and inter-monadic self-constitution*. Monadic realities have animate psychic internality (Innerlichkeit). The monads constitute themselves as a member of a communicating monadic community and as having a body; a body with its immanent and transcendent moments, so as lived and physical body at the same time (Leib and Körper). Constituting themselves as bodily beings, as embodied subjects, the monads are constituted as integrated in the universal causal connections and chains of material nature.

How can we reconstruct the internal aspect of a monad? How do we know what is it like to be a bat? Or *what is it like to be a jellyfish?*³⁴ According to Husserl: through a *genetic dismantling analysis*. We unfold the *lowest layers of primal passivity*,³⁵ and on the basis of such reconstructions we can make as assumptions concerning the mental internality of non-human animal subjects (or concerning even lower level subjects). There must be a sort of hyletic flow, a flow of stimuli and affections from the environment, and a sort of sensuous surrounding

³² This “inseparable connectedness” does not involve in Husserl that every physical event in the body of an organism must imply a psychological, mental event (as in Spinoza); it implicates the fact that there is a very close, apriori connection between the immanent and transcendent side of life, and higher grades of biological complexity in a way or another is expressed in the complexity of psychic, mental life also – but it (this inseparableness of immanent and transcendent aspects of life) does not implicate that every physical moment and event of a living being must be conscious also.

³³ Hua Mat 4: 212.

³⁴ Cf. Hua 14: 112ff.

³⁵ In the 1920s Husserl tries to disclose and clear up that (fundamentally and ultimately passive) layer of subjectivity in the texts of *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* (Hua 11).

world, built up from the complexity of those primal data and affections. It is a (primal) world of potential and actual threats, dangers, resources, enemies (predators) and mates, sexual partners, etc. Those factors and members of the envioning world are referred to or represented by the patterns of the aforementioned data, affections and stimuli. The animal *instinctively* opens up to such an environment. At some places Husserl makes systematic efforts to reconstruct the internal reality of such lower level subjects.³⁶

3. The Instinctive Foundations of Animal Consciousness

We can meet analyses and considerations concerning the phenomenological problem of instincts throughout the entire career of Husserl.³⁷ There are remarks on that in *Logical Investigations* (1900/01), in his lengthy and unpublished *Studies on the Structure of Consciousness* (1901-1914),³⁸ and in *Ideas* (1912) for example. Before the 1920s the concept of instinct was taken as a mundane, constituted phenomenon; something objective. In this regard Husserl's standing point changed fundamentally in the early 1920s. He discovered the topic of "transcendental instinct"; so such a conception of instinct, which is not a finished, objective, constituted phenomenon, *but itself also a sort of constituting intentionality*; a passive intentional constitutive tendency. The first systematic train of thought on this reinterpreted version of instinct, as passive, instinctive intentionality, could be found in his St. Märgen manuscripts. from the Autumn of 1921.³⁹ But the problem-field of the phenomenology of instincts became really important for him after 1928, especially in the 1930s, when this field gained the outlines of a systematic theory in Husserl's late manuscripts. What is even more: I think we can agree with Nam-In Lee in that regard, that – according to Lee – the theory of transcendental instinct became central and foundational in the late Husserl.

Earlier instincts where structural components of the real psychic content of the soul or the monadic subject. They were something juxtaposed to the constituting pure ego; they belonged to the way in which the souls, as mundane, real entities, were constituted. When Husserl elaborated genetic phenomenology, and genetic method came to the fore, this situation had changed, and another approach or way of interpretation concerning the instincts became possible. This change – in my opinion – was in strong connection with the reinterpretation of monads, as concrete constituting subjects, and with the researches of the fundamental layers of passivity also; (both were crucial topics in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* and in the

³⁶ See the example of jellyfish here: Hua 14: 112-116.

³⁷ Cf. Lee 1993.

³⁸ *Studien zur Struktur des Bewusstseins*. Ms. M III 3 II I.

³⁹ Ms. A VII 13.

second part of *Intersubjectivity*-volumes too [Hua 14]). After 1921 instincts also had the meaning of constituting passive tendencies of the subjectivity; such blind strivings which disclosed the world in an instinctive way. But it was not before 1928/29, when Husserl realized their central importance concerning phenomenological constitution in general; as an ultimate, founding layer or level of explanation. In my interpretation the phenomenology of instincts also has a special role in reconstruction of animal consciousness and in explication of emergence of consciousness in general.

Important is in this context another cardinal change in Husserl's view: the change of relationship between *objectifying and non-objectifying acts*. Before the 1920s the standing-point of *Logical Investigations* counted as a standard position: "*Each intentional experience is either an objectifying act or has its basis in such an act*".⁴⁰ This position became problematic in the 1920s, although in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis* he still endorses the foundational role of objectifying acts in relationship to non-objectifyings.⁴¹ The precedence of objectifying acts over non-objectifyings meant that to lived experiences of emotions, feelings, evaluations or even instincts and drives (those are the non-objectifying acts) objectifying intentionality (so: a presentation [Vorstellung] with – a relatively – clear object) gives objective direction and relatedness. There must be the presentation of an object, before we could experience feelings, emotions, instinctive inclinations, etc. In the 1930s⁴² this relationship turned to the opposite way in an unambiguous manner (paraphrasing the above cited statement): *Each intentional experience is either a **non-objectifying act** or has its basis in such an act*. Non-objectifying acts (feelings, moods, emotions, drives) – as passive intentionalities – founded the objectifying acts, as active intentionalities or presentations. According to this new view there is a primal passive (urpassive) streaming of pre-objective data and non-objectifying acts, from which any objective can emerge.

According to Husserl there is passive intentionality, without objects. That passive intentionality founds active, objectifying intentionality. This passive intentionality could be characterized as drive-intentionality, as instinctive intentionality; which is a blind striving to fulfilment, a purely passive tendency. These passive tendencies reach out to the envioning world; and they realize a passive, instinctive disclosure of this world; they direct and open up the subject (as instinctive ego or pre-ego) to the world and to stimuli and affections coming from the world. Furthermore: instinctive intentionality does not separate the subject from the world, it

⁴⁰ Hua 19/1: 514. English (2001/2): 167.

⁴¹ Hua 31: 6f.

⁴² E.g.: in C-Manuscripts (Hua Mat 8) and Hua 15.

does not juxtapose the former with the latter, *but it is the ultimate explanatory element* in Husserl's theory *which grants the coherent unity of subject and world*. In Husserl's late, systematic theory of instincts, non-objectifying instincts founded objectifyings; in him there were lower and higher level instincts. [Non-objectifying instincts were instinctive tendencies of feeding, sexuality, avoid threat (instinctual fear), the child's instinctive relationship to the mother, etc. All these instincts are collected under the title of "self-preservation"⁴³ as fundamental instinct. On this set of non-objectifying instincts are objectifyings based. In Husserl's interpretation the most basic objectifying instinct is curiosity, which is the basis of every cultural achievement, of every scientific, philosophical efforts, as well as of arts. According to Husserl there are rational, cultural instincts – which belong to the realm of objectifying instincts. Self-preservation also had its higher realization or higher effectuation on the level of culture, as ethical and cultural self-preservation. Every active effort had – in Husserl – an instinctive, passive underground, basement which articulated and formed the latitude or play-field of activity.]

The transcendental instincts unify the monads (as transcendental subjects) in an instinctive community.⁴⁴ They constitute themselves as members of a universal transcendental instinctive community, and they constitute their bodily being, environment in a necessary manner. The bodily existence of monads, and their bodily community (as collective corporeity)⁴⁵ is an inevitable expression and outcome of their self-constitution; (which, in the end, proves to be a collective, intersubjective self-constitution). The links of the chain of the collective self-constitution of the monads in the form of a universally joined instinctive community fit to each other in a continuous and harmonious way; in Husserl's description – with the emphasis and sensitive analysis of the *differences* – there is no unbridgeable gap in the process of self-constitution of transcendental intersubjectivity, to which animals also belong as lower level transcendental subjects.

How can we reconstruct the internal, psychic structures of animal monads, within this theoretical framework of transcendental instincts? In Husserl there is a difference between specifically human and non-human instincts (more precisely: not exclusively human instincts). The cultural, rational instincts are characteristic to human beings; the lower level instincts (amongst objectifying instincts: the instinct towards perception, and non-objective instincts) to animal, to non-human subjects. In the first section of this paper we mentioned "self-preservation" (or striving after self-preservation) as a characteristic feature of living beings or as animality as

⁴³ E.g. Hua Mat 8: 172, 431. Hua 42: 98ff.

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g. Hua 15: 181, 597ff.

⁴⁵ Hua 39: 181.

such. We just have to take look on what is absolutely (or subsidiarily) necessary for an organism to sustain or preserve itself – and that would give as a clue of reconstructing its internality, the structure of its animal, animate being. There is a flow of pre-objective, non-objective hyletic data, in which those formations and patterns get the highest prominence, which are – potentially – most relevant from the self-preservation of the living being in question. For the living being those affects and stimuli are the most important, which would potentially (or actually) lead it to fulfilment. The instincts so-to-say push or drive the organism towards the environing world, and lead it (him or her) in it, which they disclose to it (him or her), in such a specific way, which is characteristic to the living being, we are talking about. The more complex a living being is the more sophisticated and richer apparatus of (transcendental) instincts it has, and the richer the environment is around it.

A central moment of the late Husserl's philosophy of history, namely *generativity*, also has an ineliminable connection with his philosophy of instincts, and has its ultimate foundations in the latter, in his conception of transcendental instincts. Generativity is a basic feature of inter-subjective constitution: such capacity of a community to create culture and tradition, and to inherit it from one generation to another.⁴⁶ In Husserl generativity (so to create and preserve a cultural world and heritage throughout the work and collaboration of several generations) in the strict sense is the peculiarity of human beings. Generativity has its foundations in the cultural, creative instincts of rational monads (humans). According to Steinbock, in Husserl there is no animal generativity (animal tradition or traditionality)⁴⁷ – because (in Steinbock's Husserl-interpretation) “every animal generation” “merely repeats its environing world with the peculiar typicality of its particular species”.⁴⁸ But I think this interpretation of Husserl is a little one-sided. Yes, there are textual places, according to which in Husserl's opinion there is no animal generativity *in the strict sense of the word*. But in a wider sense – according to Husserl – *there is animal generativity*. And we can endorse this latter opinion from the point of view of modern ethology: there is animal culture (especially in the case of higher level animal, in primates e.g.) and social learning in animals. They learn some – in the wide sense of the word – culturally shaped patterns and practices from their parents and wider social environment, which they transmit to their offsprings; and what is even more important: they (the animals) can change, improve and perfect those learnt technics and practices; which is already culture and cultural

⁴⁶ The term “generativity”, as Steinbock draws our attention to that fact, has a double meaning in Husserl: it refers to the process of “generation”, of “becoming” or “emergence”, and it also refers to the “chain of generations”. Husserl, as Steinbock point out, uses both meanings in his texts. Cf. Steinbock 1995: 3.

⁴⁷ Steinbock 1995: 198.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

tradition in the narrower sense.⁴⁹ This is characteristic to higher level animals, and something instinctively based and articulated; but this points toward the direction of humanity and human tradition; so towards higher levels of intersubjective constitution, and thus also bridges the gap between human and animal world, and creates a continuous connection between these two realms, between mere animality and spirituality.

⁴⁹ Cf. e.g. A. Whiten et al. “Cultures in chimpanzees”. In *Nature* 399, pages 682–685 (17 June 1999).